

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Up Next: The 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference
- 2** Notes from the Contractor
- 3** In Her Own Words: Some Thoughts about MI-Access from an Involved Parent, Grandparent, and Volunteer
- 3** On-line Training: Coming Soon to a Computer Near You
- 4** Phase 2 MI-Access Update
- 5** Quality Assurance Review
- 5** Quality Assurance Review Case Study: Preliminary Findings
- 6** We Need Your Feedback
- 6** 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference: Important Information
- 7** No Child Left Behind: The Superintendent's Memo
- 7** State Superintendent Meets with U.S. Education Secretary
- 7** Glossary

### Back Cover

Important MI-Access Dates  
Bookmark these Web sites



P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909  
Phone: (517) 335-0471

# The Assist

Helping to Improve Access to and Progress in the General Curriculum

December 2002

Volume 2, No. 3

## UP NEXT: THE 2003 MI-ACCESS LIVE TELECONFERENCE

Dear Readers,

Our state MI-Access Annual Conferences have now concluded. We hope those who attended benefited from the experience and are back in their schools and districts sharing their newfound expertise with their colleagues. The development and implementation of MI-Access has, at the very least, helped to create a rich environment for sharing information among special educators.

Now it is time to turn our attention to the 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference, scheduled for January 29, 2003. (See the box titled "MI-Access Live Teleconference: Important Information" for the coordinates and other technical information.) As you conduct training sessions in your schools and districts, be sure to keep a running list of the questions you have and send them in before or during the teleconference so the MI-Access staff can address them. Rest assured, if you have a question, at least fifty others have the same one.

We are excited to report that this year's teleconference will be somewhat different, so newcomers and veterans alike should watch. Instead of reviewing only the information in the new and improved *Winter 2003 Coordinator/Administration Manual* (as we have in years past), this year we will focus more on District MI-Access Coordinator responsibilities and on sharing information from the field. What have you and your colleagues learned over the past few years? Do you have any special tips for making the administration of MI-Access go smoothly? Is there anything you know now that you wish you had known last year?

We also will point out some of the improvements you will encounter from last year. What are some of those improvements?

- The *School ID Sheet* is now a scan form.
- The *Teacher Feedback Survey* will be conducted on-line.
- The title of the *Determined by IEP Team (Not Participation or Supported Independence) Scannable Form* has been changed to the *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Form*.
- The back of the newly titled form has a place to bubble in the types of assessments identified by IEP Teams for students not participating in the MEAP or Phase 1 MI-Access.
- The *Student Observation Sheets* have been reorganized for easier use.
- The grid for district Student Identification Codes has been expanded to ten digits.
- The *Student Observation Sheet* now requires the student's state Unique Identifying Code.
- Districts can opt to have information preprinted on *Student Observation Sheets* and *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Forms*.
- There are no plastic bags for returning assessment materials and no labels (YEAH!).
- Because MI-Access pencils were only for the inaugural year, there are no MI-Access pencils. (Be sure to have other No. 2 pencils on hand.)
- The *School Inventory Sheet* is in the

*continued on page 2*



MICHIGAN  
Department of  
**Education**  
State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909

Mrs. Kathleen N. Straus (Detroit)  
President

Mrs. Sharon L. Gire (Clinton Township)  
Vice President

Mr. Michael David Warren, Jr. (Beverly Hills)  
Secretary

Mrs. Eileen Lappin Weiser (Ann Arbor)  
Treasurer

Mrs. Marianne Yared McGuire (Detroit)  
NASBE Delegate

Mr. John C. Austin (Ann Arbor)  
Board Member

Dr. Herbert S. Moyer (Temperance)  
Board Member

Mrs. Sharon A. Wise (Owosso)  
Board Member

#### **Ex Officio**

The Honorable John Engler  
Governor

Mr. Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Funded by the Michigan Department of  
Education and the U.S. Office of Special  
Education.

## **NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR**

### **E-mail for District MI-Access Coordinators**

E-mail has proven to be the most efficient and effective way for us to keep in touch with District MI-Access Coordinators. Therefore, it is important that you provide us with your most recent e-mail address so we can continue communicating on an ongoing basis.

We are using e-mail to send changes or additions to the assessment preparation and administration schedule as well as to send other important information related to assessment accommodations, Education YES!, and No Child Left Behind. If you are a District MI-Access Coordinator and have not received at least one e-mail from us, it means we do not have your most current address. Please let us know what it is by sending an e-mail to: [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com). (Note: You must be the *designated District MI-Access Coordinator* to be included in the electronic Listserv.)

### **District Data**

To those districts that have already returned the many forms we need to prepare for Winter 2003 MI-Access administration, we send our thanks. To those that have not returned the forms, we still need 1) the name, address, and e-mail address of your District and School MI-Access Coordinators, and 2) the projected number of students and teachers who will be involved in MI-Access this winter. It is very important that we receive this information

immediately to meet the assessment schedule. You can call the toll-free MI-Access Hotline at 1-888-382-4246 if you have any questions.

### **Training Materials Feedback**

The training materials distributed at the training sessions this past fall contained a section called *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*. The Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) would like your feedback on the guidelines and has requested that you fill out an on-line survey at the following Web site: <http://esrealitycheck.com/survey/index.asp?i=1714916>. The survey will be available at that site until February 7, 2003. (See the article titled "We Need Your Feedback" for more detailed information.)

### **Save the Date**

January 29, 2003 is the date for the MI-Access Live Teleconference for coordinators and assessment administrators. Please make sure you mark it on your calendar.

### **Winter 2003 Assessment Materials**

You will be receiving your 2003 MI-Access assessment materials in January. Reminder: The assessment window is February 17 – March 31, 2003. All materials must be shipped back to BETA/TASA by April 11. **NO LATE MATERIALS WILL BE SCORED!**

# Check it out!

The assessment component of the  
Office of Special Education and Early  
Intervention Services' Web site  
[www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)

## **The 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference** continued from page 1

back of the *Winter 2003 Coordinator/Administration Manual* instead of on the back of the *School ID Sheet*.

- The interactive CD-ROM and the Coordinator/Administration Manual have been updated and redesigned.
- In the centerfold of the manual, there is an illustration showing all of the available assessment materials so you know which ones to look for.

These are some of the improvements we made based on feedback from the field and our own quality control efforts. We will continue to

modify assessment materials when necessary, but we also realize that too many changes make it more difficult to stay up to speed. We intend to watch that balance closely.

Good luck with training, and we will see you (or, at least, you will see us) at the 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference. Have a good holiday season!

Peggy Dutcher  
Coordinator, State Assessment  
for Students with Disabilities  
E-mail: [dutcherp@mi.gov](mailto:dutcherp@mi.gov)

# In Her Own Words: Some Thoughts about MI-Access from an Involved Parent, Grandparent, and Volunteer

By: Bobbi Bonetti

*Bobbi Bonetti, mother of eight children, has been actively involved in the development and implementation of MI-Access. She is uniquely qualified because four of her children were diagnosed with "learning problems." Two of them were labeled Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI) and two were labeled Learning Disabled (LD).*

*Bobbi also has raised her grandson, Mark, since birth. Mark, like two of Bobbi's children, was labeled LD. He also has been labeled Hearing Impaired (HI) and Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired (POHI); both problems have been corrected. According to Bobbi, Mark has additionally been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Mark is now 19 and a senior in high school.*

*Because of her extraordinary accomplishments in raising children with special needs, we wanted to hear more from Bobbi about her involvement with MI-Access, her thoughts about the program, and what drives her to make the long, arduous trip from the Upper Peninsula to participate in its implementation.*

*We also want to thank Bobbi for her ongoing commitment to making MI-Access better.*

I first heard about MI-Access about a year ago. I am very active in my local Parent Advisory Committee, and we were told at a meeting that there would be a new assessment for kids with special needs.

My first thought was that this was just another test for our kids to go through, like a diagnostic test. I thought, what a waste of money. The state would get out of its problems, but it would create more problems for our kids. I also thought this would be a waste of time for both our teachers and our kids.

Now that I have been involved with MI-Access—as a member of the standard-setting panels and a member of the Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team—my perceptions have changed. I am impressed,



*MI-Access volunteer Bobbi Bonetti with grandson Mark*

very impressed. This is not a typical assessment. I also know that, maybe in a very small way, I can have an impact on what the assessment is about, and who and what it will affect. I can see now that MI-Access will be able to give our schools an idea of what is not being absorbed by our kids and what is not being taught. In short, it should help us see where our priorities need to be

and in what areas of instruction.

My involvement with MI-Access has shown me that parents who are able to take the time to join state committees—sharing their ideas and views—can make a difference, a difference for our children. I have found that members of the Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team, in particular, are keeping our kids in the forefront of their minds as they develop additional assessments.

If I had one word of advice to give to other parents of children with special needs, it would be to GET INVOLVED at all levels of your child's schooling. The state cannot monitor all schools, and all schools cannot understand your child like you can. You are first in line in your child's education...so make sure you are there to help.

## ON-LINE TRAINING: COMING SOON TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

By: Penny Zago

The MI-Access staff is pleased to announce that on-line MI-Access training will be available during the 2002/2003 school year. Initial offerings will focus on MI-Access awareness training. Consideration is also being given to a MI-Access "Assessment Administration Certification" training program.

MI-Access on-line training will be available through the Effective Schools League, State Assessment for Students with Disabilities

Community. A nominal fee will be charged to cover costs. In some cases, continuing education units (CEUs) may be offered.

This exciting new personnel development opportunity will enable teachers, administrators, and parents to learn whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them. No longer tied to central workshop locations on given dates, participants will be able to log on to the training from their own computers

and learn at their own pace.

If you have suggestions for on-line training programs related to assessing students with disabilities, please e-mail [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com). Your input is always welcome.

Keep watching *The Assist* for further information.

## PHASE 2 MI-ACCESS UPDATE

By: Sheila Potter and Jill Garnett, BETA/TASA

A mini course in "Item Writing" took place September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in Ann Arbor at Weber's Inn. About twenty Michigan educators—mostly members of the Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team (APWT) and the Content Advisory Committee (CAC)—participated. Peggy Dutcher, head of the MI-Access Program, and Mike Beck, President of Beck Evaluation and Testing Associates (BETA) led the training. Also assisting were Sheila Potter, Jill Garnett, and Deby Turner, from BETA, as well as Lilyan Grossman, an experienced editor who has worked on BETA projects for many years.

The goal of the meeting was to identify people who were (1) experienced educators (special and general education), (2) knowledgeable about the Phase 2.1 population, and (3) interested in writing items. (See "Phase 2 Update" in the October 2002 issue of *The Assist* for more information about this student group.)

In his introduction to the meeting, Mike Beck emphasized that there are many challenges associated with test and item development. One challenge is the lengthy process draft items must go through. For example, after each item is drafted, it must be critiqued, reviewed, and field-tested before it can be approved by the MDE and used. Revisions typically occur continuously throughout the process (based on tryout and pilot information) until the assessment instrument is finalized.

For that reason, it was recommended that participants not wed themselves to the items they write or hold too high a standard. A rule of thumb is that it takes three draft multiple-choice items to yield one good one and seven to eight draft open-ended/performance items to yield one good one. In addition, it was stressed that performance assessment items should be included only when they are regarded as



*Michigan educators take mini course in item writing.*

the most effective means of eliciting knowledge from students—that is, they draw forth knowledge that cannot be assessed adequately in any other format.

The following item-writing guidelines were then provided to participants for use in drafting their own samples.

- Items should reflect key elements of what students are expected to know.
- Items should be cognitively challenging for the students being assessed.
- Careful consideration should be given to the directions that students are given.
- Universal design principles should be as least restrictive as possible and allow for other modes to demonstrate competency.
- For multiple-choice items, the stem and answer choices should be kept short.
- For multiple-choice items, the stem should pose a question that can be answered without reading the answer choices.
- Open-ended items must include scoring guides or rubrics that describe how they are to be scored.

The group also learned about the importance of a test blueprint. As the framework used by test writers, the blueprint must (1) clearly describe the assessment and what will be reported; (2) represent philosophical beliefs about the content; and (3) send instructional messages to educators. Test specifications define the range of acceptable items, while the item specifications establish the rules that guide

item developers. Models of item specifications were then shared.

Following the training, participants broke into small groups and practiced writing multiple choice, true/false, observation, and performance assessment items. At the end of the first day, each group presented two sample items to the large group for critique. This activity gave individuals an opportunity to ascertain whether item writing was a good match for their interests and skills.

On the second day, meeting participants formed groups in three subject areas (English language arts, mathematics, and career and employability skills). The groups continued to draft sample assessment items, targeting the extended benchmarks from the Phase 2.1 draft assessment plan. They also reviewed the draft blueprints and item specifications from the draft proposed assessment plan and made changes as needed. The three groups later reconvened as one large group to review recommended revisions to the draft plan and sample items. (The draft plan will be disseminated statewide during the month of December for review and comment.) At the conclusion of the meeting, participants were asked to indicate their interest in continuing as item writers and/or as Phase 2 CAC members.

Those who were selected as item writers worked through October and November, along with the BETA and MI-Access staff, to develop official draft Phase 2.1 MI-Access assessment items. The MI-Access Sensitivity Review Committee, the MI-Access Phase 2 Content Advisory Committee, and the MI-Access Technical Advisory Committee will review their work in January 2003. At that point, it will be decided when item tryouts can be conducted by a statistically drawn sample. The tryouts are tentatively scheduled for late spring 2003.

## Quality Assurance Review

*The December 2001 issue of The Assist included an article on Quality Assurance Review (QAR), which refers to the process of using data and analysis to better (1) identify student needs, (2) set goals, and (3) implement strategies. As the article explained, the QAR process involves a variety of steps, all of which are intended to help focus, align, and improve special education services.*

*To determine the effectiveness of the QAR process, the MDE has been piloting it in six schools across the state—Navigator School, Pinckney School District; Parkside Elementary School, Rockford School District; Pattengill Elementary School, Berkley School District; Sparta Middle School, Sparta School District; Townsend Elementary School, Vandercook Lake School District; Winchell Elementary School, Kalamazoo School District.*

*The following article provides some abbreviated information on what has been learned so far about one component of the QAR process—Student Case Studies.*

## Quality Assurance Review Case Study: Preliminary Findings

By: Kathy Bradford, QAR Consultant, MDE-OSE/EIS and Jim Newnum, QAR Consultant, MDE-OSE/EIS

During the second year of the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) pilot study, six Michigan schools participated in an Action Research project. As part of that project, Student Case Studies were developed for three students with disabilities in each school in an effort to fulfill the open-ended questions of the process journal. Four of the schools were in their second year of the pilot and two were in their first year.

The Student Case Study component of the project had three key objectives:

- (1) to establish a *student-centric* focus on achievement;
- (2) to bring parents more fully into the process of planning and assessing the educational outcomes of their child; and
- (3) to bring general education teachers on board as fully participating team members.

Conceptually, special and general education teachers and parents would then help plan, adapt, and analyze student assessment and performance data and use it to develop the student's (1) Individualized Education Program (IEP) and (2) Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP).

As hoped, all three objectives of the project were met. The six pilot school core teams

reported that the schools' focus had shifted from a procedural approach to a process of determining the universal skills needed for each student to achieve in the general education curriculum. They saw the possibility of "carry-over" of instructional strategies and accommodations to other students in their classes, grades, and/or schools. And, there seemed to be an electric charge in the teams with some reporting that the excitement was expanding throughout the entire school staff.

Parents reported that their experiences were greatly different than those at other annual IEP Team sessions. They noted that they *really* contributed to the planning of their child's educational program and had input into expected educational outcomes. Many said that for the first time they were treated as participating members of the IEP Team, **not** as "obligatory rubber stamps."

General education teachers reported that they were surprised by what they could contribute to the discussion and planning of their students' IEPs. They found they had the full support of special education teachers in planning, making accommodations, instructing, and assessing students with disabilities.

At a meeting last June, the QAR Technical Assistance Team conducted an exercise to help teams delve deeper into their experiences with the Student Case Studies.

Following is a summary of some of what the exercise revealed.

- ✓ The most surprising realization was that general and special education have the same goals and challenges. Now with their roles clarified and a shared responsibility for each child, it is possible for the two systems to work together as a team.
- ✓ The QAR process and, in particular, the PLEP as formatted in the Student Case Study, depend on the continuity of the general and special education teaching staff. Already, staff members are trying to make adjustments for students who will be entering new classrooms where QAR and the Student Case Study are unknown or not accepted.
- ✓ Teachers, in general, are accustomed to looking at education and planning from a "parts-to-whole" mentality. Now, they are beginning to see the advantages of looking at the whole first and asking what the intent is of an overall theme, topic, project, or activity. Teachers are also beginning to (1) look at the underlying universal skills and knowledge necessary for students with disabilities to advance, (2) analyze the work they present to their students, and (3) ascertain the skills needed for continued learning.

*continued on page 6*



## WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

In the 2002/2003 MI-Access Training Packet—shipped to District MI-Access Coordinators in October and shared with MI-Access assessment administrators at school and district MI-Access training sessions—there was a letter preceding Section 3 from Jacquelyn Thompson, Director of the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS).

In the letter, she asked for feedback on the *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* (that is, the materials contained in Section 3 of the training packet). The guidelines also were distributed as a stand-alone document to local and intermediate school districts, public school academies, and interested associations.

At present, the draft guidelines include seven components:

1. Determining a Student's Level of Independence

2. State-level Assessment Options for IEP Team Consideration
3. Using Levels of Independence to Determine the Appropriate State Assessment for Students with Disabilities
4. Additional IEP Team Decisions: MI-Access Participation
5. Additional IEP Team Decisions: MI-Access Supported Independence
6. Additional Information for Those Who Administer MI-Access Assessments
7. An Additional Tool for IEP Teams

Once Phase 2 MI-Access is fully developed and implemented, additional components will be added to further assist IEP Teams in determining which assessment to use to best measure student progress.

Rather than using a paper survey to obtain your input—as we have in years past—we are tak-



ing advantage of innovative technological and survey services offered by the Effective Schools League. To complete the confidential survey, simply log on to <http://esrealitycheck.com/survey/index.asp?i=1714916> or go to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Web site at [http://www.mi.gov/documents/MI-Access\\_Index\\_13923\\_7.html](http://www.mi.gov/documents/MI-Access_Index_13923_7.html), and fill it out. The survey will be available through February 7, 2003.

The Department will use the information you and your colleagues provide to revise the draft guidelines before they are taken to the State Board of Education. A similar process will be used to gather comments on any additional components added when Phase 2 MI-Access is implemented statewide.

Thanks ahead of time for contributing your thoughts and ideas electronically. We hope you enjoy the ease of providing feedback on-line.

## 2003 MI-ACCESS LIVE TELECONFERENCE: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

To watch the 2003 MI-Access Live Teleconference—scheduled for January 29, 2003 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.—your district telecommunications specialist will need the following information.

### TIME

Test: 1415 to 1500 (2:15 – 3:00 p.m.)

Program: 1500 to 1630 (3:00 – 4:30 p.m.)

### COORDINATES

**KU Band Satellite:** AMC 2 (Formerly GE 2)

Located at 85 Degrees West

Transponder: K05

Downlink Frequency: 11800 MegaHertz (Vertical)

Audio Subcarriers: 6.2 and 6.8 MegaHertz

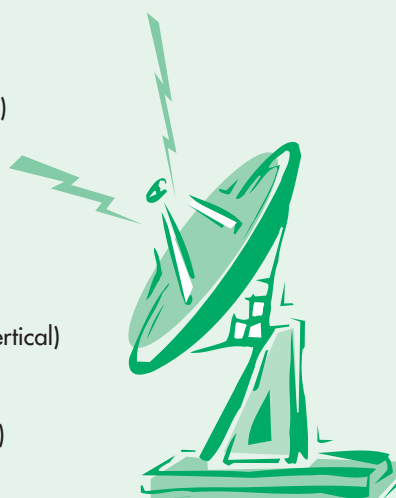
**C Band Satellite:** Telsat F1 (Formerly Anik 1)

Located at 107.3 Degrees West

Transponder: C06

Downlink Frequency: 3820 MegaHertz (Vertical)

Audio Subcarriers: 6.2 and 6.8 MegaHertz



For any technical questions prior to the day of the teleconference, please call Ed Cheeney at Future Media Corporation, at 517-332-5560. If you have questions the day of the teleconference, call the Trouble/Help line at 517-355-3405.

## Quality Assurance Review Case Study: Preliminary Findings

*continued from page 5*

- ✓ The greatest challenge involved with changing the way schools do business is to include special education staff more fully in the general education system. This will require continued efforts to maintain the communication and dialogue that has now started. One way to assure that cooperation continues is to systematically review the curriculum together. Another is to recognize special education not as a *placement* but as a *service* to students with disabilities to help them access the general curriculum.

At the close of the 2002 school year, it was still unclear whether the Student Case Study process would positively affect the academic achievement of students with disabilities. However, in the 2002/2003 school year, the QAR pilot schools are being encouraged to follow up with their respective students and case studies as a means of collecting all important student performance data.

## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: THE SUPERINTENDENT'S MEMO

Last fall, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., sent a memorandum to all Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and Public School Academy Directors, briefing them on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

The memo included a short summary of the NCLB requirements as well as information on regional contacts for local perspectives on the legislation. It also stated that regional information sessions would be announced and provided by Office of Field Services consultants to further clarify NCLB requirements.

The memo and news of further sessions came as a welcome relief to educators across

Michigan who, as Watkins somewhat humorously stated, probably feel as if "complying with the new law is a little like trying to land an airplane as the runway is being built."

In short, the memo explained that under NCLB, all districts will now be responsible for

- expanded communications with the community,
- hiring "highly qualified" staff,
- remedying persistently dangerous schools,
- including "Limited English Proficient" students in state assessments and

assessing them in a variety of subject areas,

- designating a liaison and providing transportation for homeless students, and
- participating in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing if the district receives Title 1 funds and is requested to participate in the state sample.



Tom Watkins

Title 1 schools in School Improvement Status that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years also have special requirements they must fulfill depending on which year of School Improvement Status they are in.

The overriding goal of the legislation is to ensure that "all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education." That includes the children with special needs who are assessed with MI-Access.

For MI-Access, the new law means we will be assessing students more frequently and in more subject areas than we are currently. That, in turn, means we will continue to develop additional MI-Access assessments that allow Michigan to comply with NCLB. We will keep you up to date on our progress in future issues of *The Assist*.

### STATE SUPERINTENDENT MEETS WITH U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY

Last summer—while the rest of us were enjoying the sun, swimming, and cooking out—Superintendent Watkins was off to Washington, D.C. to meet with U.S. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige. As reported in the August 29 issue of MIRS, the one-on-one meeting between the two men was "very productive."

The publication reported that Secretary Paige praised Michigan for being one of the first states to file its consolidated grant application under the new federal No Child Left Behind Act and one of the first states to receive its Reading First dollars.

MIRS went on to say that Watkins, a Democrat, and Paige, appointed by a Republican president, parted with the understanding that the door was always open for one to call the other and that the two would continue to talk freely in the future.

When asked about the meeting, Department of Education spokesman T. J. Bucholz said, "the understanding here is that education isn't a partisan subject. You want to make sure the spirit of the law, that no child is left behind, is put into place."

## GLOSSARY



**Certification:** A voluntary process, often national in scope, by which individuals who have been certified have demonstrated some level of knowledge and skill in an occupation.

**Field Test:** A test administration used to check the adequacy of testing procedures, generally including test administration, test responding, test scoring, and test reporting. A field test is generally more extensive than a pilot test. MI-Access conducts an item tryout and a field test before implementing assessments statewide.

**Item:** A statement, question, exercise, or task on a test for which the test taker is to select or construct a response or perform a task.

**QAR:** An acronym for Quality Assurance Review, which refers to the process of using data and analysis to better (1) identify student needs, (2) set goals, and (3) implement strategies. The QAR process involves a variety of steps, all of which are intended to help focus, align, and improve special education services.

**Scoring Rubric/Scoring Guide:** A presentation of the established criteria—including rules, principles, and illustrations—used in scoring responses to individual items and clusters of items. The term usually refers to the scoring procedures for assessment tasks that do not provide enumerated responses from which test takers make a choice. Scoring rubrics vary in the degree of judgement entailed, the number of distinct score levels defined, the latitude given scorers for assigning intermediate or fractional score values, and other ways.

**Universal skills (working definition):** Skills students need to access and succeed in the general education curriculum, which transcend all content areas and career pathways. An example of universal skills would be organizing, prioritizing, sequencing, comprehension, understanding cause and effect, and so forth.

# The Assist



## Important MI-Access Dates

★ **MI-Access Teleconference** ★  
**New Date • January 29, 2003**

**2003 Assessment Window**  
February 17 – March 31, 2003

**Ship MI-Access Assessment Materials  
to BETA/TASA**  
by April 11, 2003.

## Bookmark these Web sites:

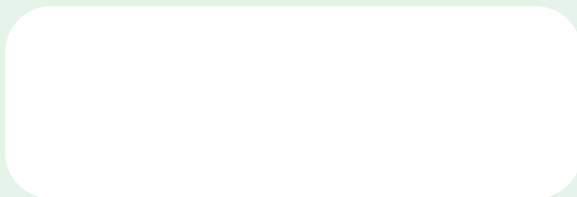
No Child Left Behind Information -  
[www.nochildleftbehind.gov/](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/) and  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/)

IDEA connections with No Child Left Behind –  
[www.nasdse.org/home.htm](http://www.nasdse.org/home.htm)

MI CLiMB information – [www.MTIP.org](http://www.MTIP.org)

New MDE Web site – [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)

This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. *The Assist* may also be downloaded from the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services section of the MDE Web site: [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde).



Michigan Department of Education  
MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program  
P.O. Box 30008 Lansing, MI 48909

